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ABSTRACT

Financial support of elementary and secondary education in Canada has gone from absolute local dependence to local with some government support to local with substantial government support to current total government support with restricted, if any allowed, local support. This has been challenged on constitutional grounds in two provinces, Alberta and Ontario, by the Roman Catholic separate school system. This system does not receive support as the public school system and, in addition, has certain legally protected constitutional rights. The Roman Catholic school system seeks the inclusion of local taxation in these rights. The paper describes current funding and funding sources for each of the provinces and territories. (DFR)

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CANADIAN SUPPORT FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION (1998-1999)[1]

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The financial support of elementary and secondary education in Canada has gone from absolute local dependence to local with some government support to local with substantial government support to the current movement of total government support with restricted, if any, allowed local support. The most current movement has been legally challenged in two provinces, Alberta and Ontario. The challenges have been on constitutional grounds with the challenger the roman catholic separate school system. This system does receive support as the public school system but in addition, the roman catholic separate school system has certain legally protected constitutional rights. The separate school system seeks the courts to include in these rights the right of local taxation. A Supreme Court of Canada decision on this issue is pending.

In the meantime, the provinces and territories are essentially supported on a full government funding scheme which removes or allows very restricted local access to the local tax base.

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[1]The substance of this paper was used in a presentation on "Recent Developments in Funding Schools in Canada" given at the American Education Research Association Conference held in New Orleans, April 2000.

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Province/Territory	*Proportion of Education Financing by Source*	
	Government/Local 1997	*Government/Local 1998*
Northwest Territories	100% Gov	100% Gov*
Yukon Territory	100% Gov	100% Gov
British Columbia	70% Gov 30% Loc	100% Gov**
Alberta	57% Gov 43% Loc	100% Gov***
Saskatchewan	39% Gov 61% Loc	40% Gov 60% Loc
Manitoba	50% Gov 50% Loc	shared
Ontario	37% Gov 63% Loc	100% Gov
Quebec	78% Gov 22% Loc	100% Gov
New Brunswick	100% Gov	100% Gov
Nova Scotia	80% Gov 20% Loc	100% Gov
Prince Edward Island	100% Gov	100% Gov
Newfoundland and Labrador	100% Gov	100% Gov

* Exception is the Yellowknife District which is expected to raise 25% of funding locally

** Local levy allowed via a referendum

*** Roman Catholic Separate School System may raise funds locally but at a government defined level

The Northwest Territory has recently been divided into two territories. Nunavut is the new territory, created April 1, 1999, and thus has yet to establish the basis on which to fund its education system. In the interim, its funding will be dependent on support allocated by the federal government of Canada. The yearly transfer payments will approximate $500 million, representing 90 per cent of the territorial government's revenue.[2] The task involves overcoming realities quite different from the realities facing the other provincial and territorial governments. Whit Fraser[3] offers insight to Nunavut unique profile: "Nunavut covers one-fifth the total landmass of Canada.

[2] G. McIntosh (1999). Nunavut open to business. Summit, June, p.13.

[3] W. Fraser (1999). Who you deal with. Summit, June, p.15.

Its population of 30,000 is barely the size of a small southern city and, to complicate matters further, the population is spread over this vast region in 28 tiny communities. Unemployment rates in some communities are 50 per cent or higher and poverty is often compounded by other social problems. There are no roads connecting the communities to each other or to southern Canada. Everything is either flown in or brought by ship during the brief ice-free summer months. With the exception of fish and wildlife – a large part of today's northern diet – and the stone carvings that are a growing part of a local cash economy, all of the materials used in business, government and everyday life come from someplace south."

Each of the provinces and territories, in addition to the movement toward full government funding, are continuing their recognition and financial support of the additional educational needs of students classified as special needs students. The financial recognition of the needs of these students has in many way resulted in a financial structure within a financial structure. The significant number of students that are now given recognition as students in need of special educational attention in combination with the significantly higher educational costs associated with educational programing for these students is starting to elicit discussions in terms of the impact on available resources. The educational and financial commitments that are given by governments will necessarily command a different scenario than has served past fiscal policy.

Special Education Assistance (1998-1999)

Yukon	Provides specialized equipment/testing that various students may require. Personnel positions supported for this purpose are School Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Consultants, Psychoeducational Consultant, Speech/Language Coordinator, Physiotherapist, Coordinator, School Psychologist Services, Coordinator,

School Support Services, Administrative Assistant, Teacher, Hearing Impaired.

Northwest Territories

Inclusive Schooling

This funding allows Councils and Districts to provide support systems and services to enable all students to be included as full participating members in regular classrooms appropriate to their age within their home communities.

Magnet Facilities

Certain institutional facilities provide services to non-resident students and create a high concentration of students with very challenging needs. These facilities have been identified as requiring additional support and funding is provided based on the average number of annual FTEs. There are currently three facilities identified as "magnet facilities" in operation in the NWT. There are also four open and closed custody Young Offender facilities in the NWT that qualify for funding. Currently, the Young Offenders Protocol states that one teacher will be dedicated for each of the four secure and open custody facilities.

British Columbia

Funding for special education programs is targeted, meaning that school districts must spend this funding in the area of special education The school district may, however, spend it in any section of special education, not necessarily in the area that generated it.

Alberta

Funds are allocated to school boards for severely disabled student enrolled in an appropriate special education program. This funding provides for the additional costs of staff, learning resources, and equipment associated with programs for students with severe disabilities.

Saskatchewan

All special education funding is conditional, that is:

- school boards must have the special education services and programs in place before funding approval is recognized
- for per pupil recognition, students must meet the designation criteria
- special education staff must meet the qualification requirements.

Special Education recognition is provided in a variety of ways and represents recognized conditional funds for specific programs. The special programs include special needs program for low cost, learning disabled and emotionally disturbed pupils, and high cost special education funding. The incremental rates are in addition to the basic per pupil rates.

Manitoba

The total of:

(a) Coordinator/Clinician support is the lesser of maximum support or allowable expenditures for salaries, professional service fees, and travel and subsistence for qualified clinicians and up to one qualified special needs coordinator.

(b) Level II support based on $8,520 for each pupil who is severely multi-handicapped, psychotic, autistic, deaf/hard of hearing, visually impaired, or very severely emotionally/behaviourally disordered, and

(c) Level III support based on $18,960 for each pupil who is profoundly multi-handicapped, profoundly deaf or profoundly emotionally/behaviourally disordered.

Ontario

Two types of special education funding are available:

- General special education funding is based on a school board's enrolment and is called the Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA.) This funding meets the needs of students who require some special education services. School boards fund the costs of special education teachers, education assistants, and other professionals (such as psychologists or speech-language therapists) with this grant.

- Intensive support special education funding is provided for students who require high-cost specialized programs and services. Grants are also tailored to individual student needs, and funding stays with the student if he or she moves to another part of the province. This component is called the Intensive Support Amount (ISA).

School boards have flexibility as to how they meet the special education needs of students with this funding.

Quebec

Il est à noter que certaines allocations particulières sont également consenties en adaptation scolaire, notamment pour les services régionaux et suprarégionaux.

Les allocations de base des commissions scolaires comportent certains montants d'allocations spéciales pour l'éloignement et la dispersion, les petites écoles, la taille et le maintien des écoles.

New Brunswick

The special education budget allocation of $47.0 million represents 7.64% of grants in aid.

Nova Scotia

Special education grants are calculated as the lessor of a) the product of the school board's previous year's funding enrolment multiplied by $243.90, or b) the actual cost of special education programs provided by the school board and approved by the Minister.

Newfoundland and Labrador

Funding included under Basic Support Program. For staffing purposes, extra Teacher Salary Units are allocated to school boards for special education; for operating, funds are included in the formulas under the Basic Support Program, e.g., a special allocation to cover programs for severely handicapped children formerly provided through the province's developmental centre. There is an additional grant, the Student Assistant Program to further assist with integration of the disabled into the regular school system. Special transportation costs are included in the transportation category.

Given the geographical structure of the territories and many of the provinces, school systems could find themselves in fairly remote and isolated areas. Such remoteness and isolation obviously create additional fiscal concerns for the affected school systems. If one was to review the funding schemes of the individual provinces and territories, the required special fiscal consideration for such situations is evident.

Another area of fiscal support that has been maintained is in the area of early childhood education. This is an area that has been recently debated in some provinces but the support has been maintained. It is interesting to note that this support exists without a legislative mandate.

The Canadian way is to encourage culturally and linguistically distinctive groups to maintain this heritage. The school system is seen as a vehicle to help these groups in this task as well as a vehicle to enable the other groups of society to share in this diversity. Consequently, support for a number of groups such as Aboriginals is given special funding within the financial schemes. Canada being an official bilingual country, English and French, also means that support for both of these linguistic groups are visible within financial schemes across the country.

Province/Territory	***Languages Fiscally Recognized by the Government***
Northwest Territories	English, French, Aboriginal languages (special emphasis on Dene and Inuuqatiqiit)
Yukon Territory	English, French, Aboriginal languages
British Columbia	English, French, Aboriginal languages, Mandarin, Japanese
Alberta	English, French, Aboriginal languages
Saskatchewan	English, French, Heritage languages
Manitoba	English, French, Heritage languages
Ontario	English, French, Aboriginal languages
Quebec	English, French
New Brunswick	English, French
Nova Scotia	English, French
Prince Edward Island	English, French
Newfoundland and Labrador	English, French, Aboriginal languages

An area of support that is commanding considerable resources is technology. For example, Ednet has been established by Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture and has put in place a Junior High Network Project Listserv which "is a closed (private) list wherein

these teachers can freely share their ideas, concerns, resources, teaching/assessment, strategies, and other information to support each other's learning and teaching."[4] Alberta Education has established partnerships among the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Alberta School Boards Association, the College of Alberta School Superintendents, and the TELUS Bright Futures Foundation. The Yukon Department of Education in its "GrassRoots Program"[5] aims to facilitate teachers' use of the Internet for learning activities with students and to develop, through that process, curriculum related materials of value to other teachers. The British Columbia Ministry of Education, Skills and Training announced on April 14, 1998 an investment of $123 million over six years in an information highway called PLNet that links all provincial public schools, colleges and institutes. The cooperation between SHL Systemhouse, a private company, and The Information Technology Services Division, the provincial government's network operator, provides marketing and client support services including long-range service planning, network monitoring and help-desk support. The Information Technology Services Division is responsible for network delivery including design, engineering and operations management. Costs involved in these ventures is substantial but ones that the provinces and territories have decided are positive in relation to where their school systems must perform. The burden of the costs to government has been lessened by the establishment of government-private industry partnerships.

The direction of policy and the development of specific foci within the varies provincial and territorial funding schemes are very similar and are distinguished more by time of

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[4] http://jh_network.EDnet.ns.ca/listserv.html

[5] http://www.yesnet.yk.ca/newsf.html

implementation than characteristics of the policy or foci. This can in part be explained by the voluntary participation of the respective governments in the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). Constitutionally education is not a federal responsibility with the exception of defined groups such as the Inuit and Dene. Thus, each province and territory has the right to establish its own unique education system. Nevertheless, they have chosen to meet regularly via CMEC to at least inform each other of education policy. This venue provides an excellent forum for expanding knowledge, interpersonal exchanges, and increased understanding. One result is relative ease in mobility of students from one provincial system to another.

Three significant structural changes associated with changes in government support of public education have been (1)amalgamations of school boards, (2)establishment of school councils as integrated components of school-based decision making and policy making, and (3)alternative school learning environments through the operation of charter schools. Many provinces have reduced the number of operating school boards by at least 50 per cent. School councils are fast becoming a dominant player in decisions at the local level on the utilization of allocated government funds. Charter schools, primarily an option in the province of Alberta, have the potential to be experimented within other provinces.